

**Testimony Submitted to Appropriations Committee  
February 11, 2014**

**HB 5030, An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015**

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Good afternoon Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Ranking Members and members of the Appropriations Committee.

I am Steve Sigel, a resident of New London, and for the past 26 year's executive director of the Garde Arts Center, southeastern Connecticut's non-profit regional center for the performing arts and education in downtown New London.

I am speaking to you today mostly in my capacity as President of the Connecticut Arts Alliance, an advocacy organization representing the diverse cultural and creative sector of the State established to ensure that the arts are central to life in Connecticut. The CAA works to foster public education and awareness of the arts, increase funding for the arts, and influence public funding and actions that affect the arts. From a legislative perspective, our goals are to ensure

- That the arts remain a distinct priority in Connecticut
- That our legislators understand the unique contributions the Arts make to the social fabric and economic vitality of the State
- That state investments in institutions, program granting and the CT Arts Endowment increase to optimal levels of impact

I wanted to express our support to the General Assembly and the administration in recognizing that what we do in our communities throughout the state is intrinsic and essential to providing the foundation on which economic development is possible. Namely, a deeply rooted sense of place and the immeasurable quality-of-life which our communities, by our very existence, demonstrate the value and promise of our region.

The arts institutions and creative workers from a variety of disciplines provide the connective tissue and stimulus to small businesses, public schools, major industry, transportation, housing, invention and innovation, historic restoration at a time when creativity, cross-sector collaboration, and regional connection are not merely appealing trends they are the essential tools for the future of our state.

(We have been able to host almost every kind of public gathering whether arts-related or business related fostering dialogue as much as giving inspiration and hope that the best is ahead. At a time when the discretionary dollar has diminished, we have been able with your support to open our doors to all kinds of constituencies, regardless of affordability, and provide programs for young people and learning incentives for students in our public schools. We host regional arts organizations and schools, raise money for other non-profits, provide a steady influx of visitors and customers to our Cities and towns, and showcase the great assets of our community. )

In these most challenging of economic times our organizations are now called upon more than ever to preserve and strengthen the economic, educational and cultural growth of the regions we serve. Because of these challenging times, we especially appreciate your acknowledgement of and continued financial support for our critical role in creatively improving the difficulties which affect so many of our populations.

Americans for the Arts' recently completed statewide analysis of arts spending - the CT Arts and Economic Report IV - highlighted the broad and comprehensive economic impact arts organizations in every town and city. In aggregate the Connecticut Arts Industry in 2010 – during a very weak economy - generated \$653 million in organization and audience spending, yielding \$59 million in local and state revenues, and supporting 18,314 full-time jobs. I have attached a copy of the report summary.

Individually and collectively, the CT Arts Alliance has been very engaged with the State about how to best focus state-wide cultural policy and strategy and connect our catalytic energy to the State's economic, innovation, housing, transportation, education, tourism, historic preservation and social service goals. For all of us who for years have provided the creative place-making that never ceases – even in the toughest of times – to nurture the unique assets and qualities of each of our cities and towns, we look forward to working with all branches of government in the months and years ahead, and thank you for your continued support and investment in the arts and cultural institutions that define who we are and what we will become.